

August 6 TAG Meeting: Alsen, Louisiana. Devils Swamp Lake Site

Agencies in attendance: Corp of Engineers, LDHH, LDEQ, EPA

Bart Cañellas started his presentation and was interrupted by a complaint that they couldn't understand him. Bart addressed the issue and we moved forward. This is a combination of the questions asked at the meeting, with answers given with some additional information.

1. Who is Schuler paid by? Doesn't he work for the EPA?

Answer: Mr. Schuler is paid by the recipient of the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG), as a Technical Advisor (TA) retained to interpret technical information for the community, through the TAG. He does not work for the EPA, he is the TA hired by the TAG.

2. What is the TAG Grant and how did this start, we didn't know anything about it?

Answer: In January of 2010 the EPA sent out an announcement of the availability of a Technical Assistance Grant to the community with contact numbers for those interested in applying. This was also announced in a fact sheet mailed to the community in February of 2010. An ad was also run in the Baton Rouge Advocate, stating the intent of Alsen-St.Irma Lee Community Enterprise, Inc. This notice gave instructions on filing a letter of intent for a separate grant application by March 19, 2010. It also stated the applications had to be filed by April 19 2010, which was extended to May 19, 2010. No other applications were received.

3. We didn't see it, some people can't read, and don't get the paper.

Answer: We mailed the announcement and fact sheet to the Community.

3. Why did we just receive this question and answer list today, at the meeting? We didn't have any time to review the list, why wasn't it mailed.

Answer: These are the answers to the questions that were given at the last meeting. We were not able to mail them and sent copies to the TAG. We informed Rosemary Jones and Albertha Hastens that we would bring them to this meeting. This is a summary of the questions and answers given at the meeting in July.

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) and the Corp of Engineers (USACE) went over the responses related to Health Consultations and the Levee Breach.

4. Clean Harbors had a meeting with the Community and Mr. Schuler wasn't there to represent the Community, why?

Answer: Mr. Schuler is the TA for the Alsen St. Irma-lee Community Enterprise, Inc. TAG Group in matters related to the Devil's Swamp Lake Superfund Site and has nothing to do with Clean Harbors Operations. He is available to help the Community with technical understanding of the actions related to the Devil's Swamp Lake Site only.

There were many other questions related to the Clean Harbors meeting and the closing of a cell on the Clean Harbors Site. The Community wants a meeting with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and Clean Harbors and had other questions related to this topic. A motion was passed that they would apply for a public hearing on this topic during the open comment period.

Answer: This is an issue with Clean Harbors and has nothing to do with the Devil's Swamp Lake Site and the Tier 2 Remedial Investigation. The issue should be addressed by the Community with Clean Harbors and LDEQ.

The sample plan was discussed with the group and a slide show was presented showing the fish and sediment samples that were taken. We did take soil samples, on two properties adjacent to the levee. We were not able to collect crayfish samples but will return to the area when they are available.

We discussed the project schedule submitted by Clean Harbors that includes a timeline for the completion of the project. This was posted on a board in the meeting room and we left it with the TAG.

The Unilateral Administrative Order was cited as the document that explains the work required to be conducted during this investigation, Clean Harbors role and the responsibility of EPA and LDEQ to supervise and provide oversight to the investigation.

The draft results of the Tier 2 Remedial Investigation should be back by the end of the year and we will have a meeting with the Community in 2013.

5. Is there any testing to be done where the people are living? What is the parameter of the investigation? The contaminants get into our neighborhood when it floods.

Answer: Residential areas close to the Devil's Swamp Lake are located at a higher elevation, or up gradient from the Site. There is no evidence of contamination migrating from the Devil's Swamp Lake Area across Highway 61 into the neighborhood. As a result the investigation has located around the area where we have found contamination which is down gradient from the Clean Harbors facility into the Devil's Swamp and Devil's Swamp Lake.

6. What about our water, isn't the aquifer contaminated?

The wells that supply the community with water were tested in 2010 by Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, tap water tested by the EPA and there was no contamination found. The water comes from the City of Baton Rouge. The City is required to test the water regularly and provide results to its customers.

7. We need soil samples taken in the Community, there are PCB's, lead and other chemicals in the Community. This has gone on for 51 years, what about all those Chemicals from back then? Those old Rollins pits overflowed into the swamp and the water flooded all the way to the highway. Do you use aerial photography to show you where to sample?

Answer: We are investigating the PCB's in Devils Swamp Lake Site. Nothing has led us to sample outside the area of the current investigation. We have found no contamination leading up to the community. Yes, we do use aerial photos and left those maps with you at the last meeting.

8. What studies were done by LDHH?

Answer: LDHH did a Health Consultation in November, 2009 in regard to the drinking water being supplied to the Alsen Community being contaminated by the Devil's Swamp Lake Site (DSL). The findings of the study were; Contaminant concentrations detected in the Scenic Highway, Jetson and Layton wells were below comparison and will not harm people's health. The Baton Rouge Water Department (BRWD) reports all three wells are drawn from the Southern Hills Aquifer which underlies the Alsen service area at depths reaching 2400 feet. The Southern Hills Aquifer is not geologically or hydrologically connected to Bayou Baton Rouge, Devil's Swamp or Devil's Swamp Lake. A Site map of the area attached shows the location of the wells in relation to the DSL site. Surface water flow lines and approximate elevations demonstrate water flows from the municipal wells towards the DSL site.

When the results are back from the Tier 2 investigation The EPA will do a new Human Health Risk and Ecological Risk Assessment. LDHH will also use the new data in their studies.

Bart ran a short presentation showing the sampling that had taken place at and around DSL. Slides of different fish, catfish and Bass, core samples sediment samples, the recording process, and containment and preparation for shipment to Labs. He stated that we collected some soil samples on two different properties on the levee.

9. Question then came up about the levee? The Corp addressed these questions.

Answer: The Lake was a result of soil removed from the swamp to do a foundation for expansion to the Baton Rouge Harbor and to preserve the integrity of the 2 ½ mile navigation channel and western foundation expansion area. After the floods of 73 and 74 industry wasn't interested in moving into the area and the project was not continued.

10. Was there an Environmental Study done at that time?

Answer: No. Starting in 1989 samples were taken from the dredging of the canal and monitored for the next 9 years. The results were all below comparison values. Dredging continues in the canal.

11. This levee was built on my land, and I want to see the feasibility study. I also want a core study done at the bottom of the levee. This was done by Governor Edwards and we didn't have anything to say about it and I never signed anything.

Answer. The USACE will have to look into this and get back to the property owner. The cores at the bottom of the levee are not part of this study. We sample the surface from 0-6 inches. The results from

those samples are analyzed and we move forward from those results. There is no need to go any deeper if there is no exposure pathway.

12. Mr. Schuler have you ever been back to the lake?

Answer: No I have not. We tried to go back to the lake but we were unable to find access.

Mr. Schuler summarized the meeting as to what you heard tonight and what is to come in future meetings.

1. Corp to study the past records, feasibility study, access, etc.
2. Request will be made with LDEQ and Clean Harbors for a hearing on the closing of the cell at the Clean Harbors Site.
3. LDHH & EPA will study the results of the Tier 2 Remedial Investigation.

Dr. Ratard talks about cancer studies. We study the cancer rates of people all over the state, but exclude skin cancer in these studies. Alsen not being a City makes it a little more difficult, but we take the total population of people in the area (859) and compare that with the cancer rate for the entire State. There were 31 cancers in 23 years in a population of 859. (21 Deaths) This number is less than half of what you would find in the State.

13. Does it include unusual types of cancer? That figure can't be right, more than 21 people died of cancer in Alsen in the last 23 years. We have a disproportionate amount of harmful chemicals released into minority communities.

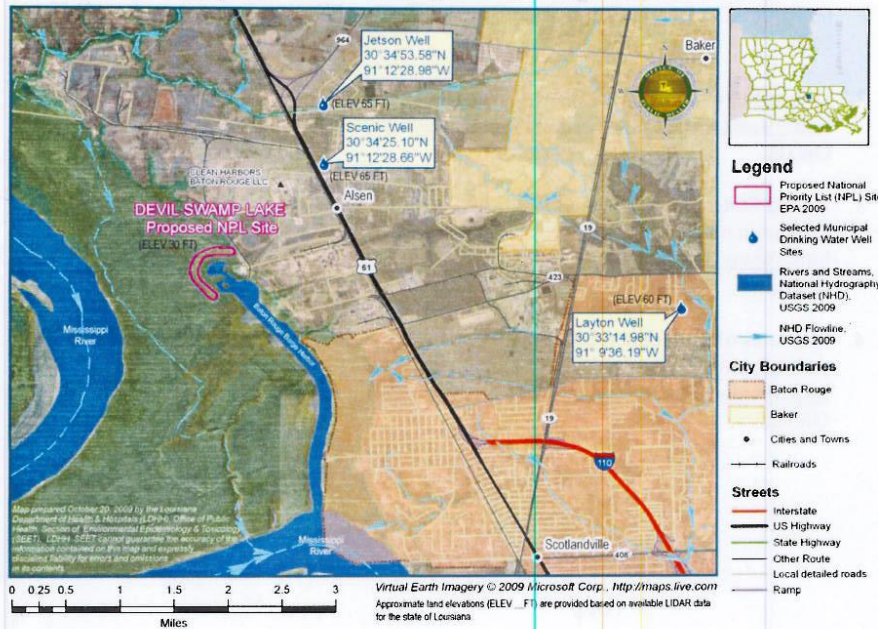
Answer: We do not include unusual cancers but do compare these regular cancer deaths across the State with the ones in Alsen. If you know of other people sick with cancer or died from cancer in the Neighborhood, please send me their name, type of cancer, and whether they are living or deceased.

Thanks, Bill Little

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214-665-8131

Devil's Swamp Lake EPA Proposed NPL Site Proximity to Area Municipal Drinking Water Wells



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